

Edenton, North Carolina. St. Paul's  
Church.

200th Anniversary of the building  
of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

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St. Paul's  
Episcopal Church  
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# 200th ANNIVERSARY

of the building of

## St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Edenton, North Carolina *St. Paul's Church*

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Rt. Rev. Thomas C. Darst, D. D., Bishop



Rev. Charles Aylett Ashby, Rector

### VESTRY

E. R. Conger, Senior Warden

D. M. Warren, Junior Warden  
and Secretary

Fred P. Wood, Treasurer

E. I. Warren

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J. A. Moore

Dr. Wm. I. Hart

John W. Graham

Chas. P. Wales

Geo. C. Wood

Dr. M. P. Whichard

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Addresses of  
John Washington Graham, Esq.  
and  
Mrs. Charles P. Wales  
Both of  
ST. PAUL'S PARISH  
Edenton, N. C.



Delivered at the  
DIOCESAN CONVENTION  
of  
East Carolina  
Held In  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Edenton, N. C.

MAY 13, 1936



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# HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

— BY —

JOHN WASHINGTON GRAHAM, ESQ.



## INTRODUCTORY



BISHOP DARST, Members of the Convention of the Diocese of East Carolina, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is with full awareness of my personal limitations that I undertake to present to you on the occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the building of this church, its history and the history of St. Paul's Parish.

## BEGINNINGS

At the time of the establishment of the Colony of Carolina under the Lords Proprietors in 1663, it was contemplated and provided for in the charter that the Church of England should be made the established church of the province. Although the Lords Proprietors were committed to the policy of the established church, they did not attempt to erect the establishment until about 40 years after they received the charter. During this period the Quakers had been quite active in Carolina and William Edmunson and George Fox both came to the province on missionary tours. In 1694 the Quaker influence reached its climax under Governor John Archdale, a convert of George Fox.

The Church party needed a leader to unite and organize its scattered followers. This leader was found in Henderson Walker, who, upon assuming his duties as governor in 1699, resolved to exert his efforts toward the establishment of the Church of England. Success crowned his efforts in 1701, when

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the Church party pushed through the Assembly the first Vestry Act in the history of North Carolina. The first parish organized under this act was the Chowan Parish, organized December 15, 1701, and afterwards known as St. Paul's. It has had a continuous existence since that date.

It may be well to note that the question of an establishment caused considerable dissension among the people of the colony, especially was it opposed by the Quakers and finally resulted in a rebellion against the Government led by Thomas Cary in 1710. This uprising was quelled and the Church establishment became fully recognized.

### EARLY YEARS OF THE PARISH

The Parish of Chowan was organized at a vestry meeting held December 15, 1701, and the first vestrymen were His Excellency Henderson Walker, Governor; The Honorable Thomas Pollock, President of the Provincial Council; William Dukinfield, a Justice of the General Court; Nicholas Crisp; Edward Smithwick, a member of the Assembly of the Province; John Blount, a Justice of the General Court; James Long; Nathaniel Chevin, member of the Provincial Council; William Benbury; Col. Thomas Leuten, and Capt. Thomas Blount. At this meeting Col. Wilkins and Capt. Leuten were elected Church Wardens and Mr. Chevin Clerk of the Vestry. Mr. Smithwick gave an acre of land on which to erect a House of Worship, and the Vestry at once contracted for such a structure, the same to be of wood and 25 feet in length. At a meeting of the Vestry held exactly a year from the date of the organization of the Parish the Vestry viewed the Chapel and accepted the same from the contractor. The Chapel was, however, not completed as late as 1708, when it still required a floor.

The exact location of this chapel is not known but upon tracing the title of the Smithwick grant of 380 acres to the present, it is found to be a part of the Hayes Plantation now owned and occupied by Mr. John G. Wood, said plantation lying along the East shore of the Edenton Bay of the Albemarle Sound.

The fortunes of the Church of England in the

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Colony during this early period were at a low ebb. From a letter directed by the Vestry which met March 2, 1713, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel we find the following passage, "We being a large Parish, many poor inhabitants and those seated at a great distance from each other, passages very uncertain for reason of a broad river which runs through the whole of the Parish near 100 miles in length and in many places broad, and but one sorry church on the North shore of the sound never finished. Parsonage house and glebe we have none nor a school." And further in a letter from the Vestry to the Society in 1723 it is said that upon the death of the Reverend Thomas Newnam there was not a single clergyman in the whole province although there were eleven Parishes.

During the early period of the Parish services were held by the missionaries sent to the Colony by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and by readers regularly appointed by the Vestry.

It is possible that a second church of wood construction was built in the Parish, for in 1708 the Vestry finding the first chapel inadequate, determined to build a church 40 feet long and 24 feet wide, but there is no evidence in the Parish record that the building was ever undertaken.

### BUILDING OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

The first reference that is found in regard to the erection of a church at Edenton comes from the minutes of the Vestry of November 30, 1724, when the Church Wardens were ordered to desire the Commissioners for Building a Court House and Other Buildings to draw from the hands of the Lords Proprietors' Receiver General the sum of 200 pounds sterling and also the sum of 200 pounds, out of the hands of the Public Treasurer, the same being appropriated for the building of a church at Edenton and the Commissioners be desired to proceed on the same building.

From a paper which seems to be an account rendered by some one not named therein, for "Money disbursed on account of the church," we find these items: "May 10, 1736, To money for clearing lots,

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12L; August 6, 1736, To paid for 215 bu. of shells at 1 shilling, 6 pence, 8L, 7 shillings, 6 pence; same date paid in part of bricks 100L. September 22, 1736, 100L; January 4, to Mr. Bonner, 36L." In 1737, the following items appear: "paid for 3,874 bu. shells,  $\frac{1}{2}$  ton iron, 95L, (to make nails), and scaffolding rope 4L, 16 shillings, and hides for scaffolding, 9L; a hogshead to fetch water, 1L; the bricklayer 561L;  $3\frac{1}{2}$  days labor 2 Negroes each, 3L, 10 shillings; to money paid for Gabb'd work on the East window, 20L; the total expenditure amounting to 1240L, 17 shillings, 4 pence." It is evident from the above items that the work of building was commenced with the clearing of lots March, 1736, and continued to December 5, 1737, when there were 561L charged as paid the bricklayer. The date fixed for these items is earlier than that mentioned in the records of St. Paul's Parish and may be easily accounted for by the fact that the money expended prior to December 5, 1737, had been provided for by a voluntary contribution made by private individuals, with the exception of the 195L received from the Parish. The records of the Parish commence when the tax or levy was made by the Vestry upon the tythables of the Parish, for the completion of the building. In the first instance the fund was controlled by commissioners selected by the contributors to the fund and in the latter being money collected by law from the people of the Parish, it was taken in hand and disbursed by legal authority.

At a Vestry meeting for the Northeast Parish of Chowan Precinct at Edenton, the 10th of May, 1736, "ordered that to contribute towards defraying the expenses of building a church at Edenton, for the support of the poor and other contingent charges of the Parish a tax or levy of 20 shillings per pole be levied on each tythable in the Precinct for the ensuing year."

April 27, 1737, the Vestry ordered a tax or levy of 10 shillings per pole to be levied on each tythable of the Parish to defray the expenses of the church at Edenton and for other purposes.

July 1, 1738, Mr. Edmund Gale, a commissioner to collect money to build the church, was ordered

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by the Vestry to account for money received by him.

July 22, 1738, the Vestry "ordered that the present Church Wardens receive and collect all the money now due to the Parish, that all the money is properly Parish moneys except ye levy for this year be payd into the hands of Thomas Leuten to be by him applied towards compleating a church now begun at Edenton, he to give security, etc."

At a General Assembly held at Edenton on 21st day of August, 1740, an act was passed to enable the commissioners hereinafter mentioned to finish the church already begun at Edenton. This act provided for the levying of a tax of 2 shillings proclamation money for 2 years next ensuing on every tythable within the Parish, of the County of Chowan to defray the expenses and charge of completing and finishing the Church. This act further provided that as soon as the building was fit for Divine Service that the Vestry should meet in the Church and in no other place under penalty of paying a fine if they did otherwise.

The Reverend Clement Hall, who came to the Parish in 1745, and of whom more will be said later, writes in a letter of June 19, 1746, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, "Our church at Edenton has ye roof righted, but ye work is at a stand at present because (as it is said) the commission does not agree about it." From other letters sent by Mr. Hall to the Society we learn that the work on the Church remained at a standstill until after 1755.

From the entry in the records of the Vestry is the notation "at a Vestry meeting held at the church in Edenton on 10 day of April, 1760, pursuant to a late act of the Assembly," we know that this was the first time the Vestry met in the church and also since the act referred to is the statute which was passed in 1740 to aid in the erection of the church and which act required the building to be used by the Vestry for meetings as soon as it was fit for Divine Service that on this day the church was so far completed as to be usable.

As to the efforts towards completing the interior



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of the Church there are found the following entries in the Vestry Minutes: May 20, 1767, ordered that Mr. Swift send to Philadelphia for a quantity of glass to glaze the church at Edenton. May 9, 1772, "ordered that Mr. Hoskins be allowed 10L 17 shillings 3 pence for glass received from Lowther Hardy and Little for the church. April 12, 1773, ordered that Thomas Benbury, Church Warden, proceed to finish the inside of the Chapel in Edenton in a workman like manner. April 18, 1773, Thomas Hunter agrees to repair and finish all the woodwork of the inside of the church and doors in a good workman like manner, to the satisfaction of the Vestry. August 28, 1773, Thomas Eggleston undertook the inside work of the church to finish it in a decent manner by Christmas Day. August 24, 1774, Thomas Eggleston having died, it was ordered that Thomas Hunter be allowed 41L, for finishing the inside wood work of the church and having done so to the satisfaction of the Vestry.

From the above excerpts of record evidence, we find that the work on the building was commenced on the 10 day of May 1736, and the church had attained a degree of completion which permitted its use about April 10, 1760, for Divine Service, but the inside wood work was not finished until some time in 1774.

During the period of the construction of the church the Parish was served by two ministers of outstanding ability and extraordinary faithfulness in their work of carrying the Gospel to the people of the Colony. These devout men were the Reverend Clement Hall and the Reverend Daniel Earle, who served the Parish not only in Edenton but also at the four chapels located throughout Chowan Precinct which included the territory now embraced by Gates and Chowan Counties.

In the way of results, probably the greatest work done in the Colonial period was by the Reverend Clement Hall, a native of Perquimans Precinct. He went to England for Holy Orders and returned to North Carolina about the end of the year 1744 or early in 1745. He officiated at Edenton, and held services in the court house before the completion of St. Paul's church and was, perhaps, for a

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part of the time, the only clergyman in the province, but his work was not confined to his own Parish. East and West his work extended, and once or twice a year he journeyed to the borders of the province. We may estimate the extent of his work by the modest account he gives of it in 1752: "I have now thro' God's gracious assistance and blessing in about 7 or 8 years, tho' frequently visited with sickness, been enabled to perform (for aught I know) as great ministerial duties as any minister in North America, viz, to journey about 14,000 miles, preach about 675 sermons, baptize 6,195 persons and sometimes administered the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to two or three hundred communicants in one journey besides churching of women, visiting the sick." It is interesting to note that in addition to his other activities Clement Hall was also the author of several pamphlets and books on religious subjects and that a number of his writings were published in New Bern, North Carolina. It is believed that he was the first North Carolina author. He was one of the most devout and earnest of the missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to labor in North Carolina. Had there been many men of the stamp of Clement Hall, the fortunes of the church would have been far different from what they really were. Clement Hall died during the year 1759 while rector of St. Paul's Parish.

The Reverend Daniel Earle, who is known to history as "Parson" Earle, was born in the town of Bandon, Ireland, and was the youngest son of an Irish nobleman. In early life he was an officer in the British army. His marriage with the daughter of a church official changed the whole tenor of his life, and he soon resigned his commission to take Holy orders.

In 1757 he came to the Albemarle section to act as curate for the venerable Clement Hall, then in very feeble health, and upon his death was made full rector.

"Parson" Earle was full of energy, public spirit and enterprise, and established at his home, "Bandon," the first classical school in North Carolina for boys.



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He made improvements in the cultivation of flax, and taught the people of this section proper methods of preparing flax for the loom and weaving.

He was an active sympathizer in the struggle of the colonies for independence, and was on that account debarred from preaching in his church at Edenton during the Revolution.

He was also unjustly accused of being a Tory because he did not sever all connection with the Church of England, but he held that the church was a unit; that it was of divine origin; and that the Bishop of London alone had that power.

He died in 1790, and was buried near the site of his old home, which was located on the Chowan River about 15 miles from Edenton.

## THE REVOLUTION

The events leading up to the War of the Revolution crowded close upon the time when St. Paul's Church was completed.

The Vestry first acknowledged the authority of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina at a meeting held for the election of a Vestry at the Court House in Edenton on Monday, April 8, 1776, and this Vestry passed on June 19, 1776, what is known in the history of the Parish as The Test, the language of this resolution being as follows:

## THE TEST

We, the subscribers professing our allegiance to the King and acknowledging the constitutional executive power of government do solemnly profess, testify and declare that we do absolutely believe that neither the Parliament of Great Britain nor any member or constituent branch thereof have a right to impose Taxes upon these Colonies to regulate the internal policy thereof and that all attempts by Fraud or Force to establish and exercise such claims and powers are violations of the Peace and Security of the People and ought to be resisted to the utmost and that the people of this Province singly and collectively are bound by the Acts and Resolutions of the Continental and Provincial Congresses because in both they are freely

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represented by persons chosen by themselves. And we do solemnly and sincerely promise and engage under the sanction of Virtue, Honor and Sacred Love of Liberty and our Country to maintain and support all and every the Acts, Resolutions and Regulations of the said Continental and Provincial Congresses to the utmost of our Power and Ability.

In testimony whereof we have hereto set our hands this 19th day of June, 1776:

Richard Hoskins

David Rice

Pelatiah Walton

Wm. Hinton

Thos. Bonner

Wm. Boyd

Thos. Benbury

Jacob Hunter

John Beasley

William Bennett

William Roberts

During the Revolution the Vestry became known officially as the Court of Overseers of the Poor and seemed to be occupied almost entirely with secular affairs. The Parish records show that meetings were held by this body through 1770 but from then until 1811 there is no record of meetings.

As to the fortunes of St. Paul's Church during the War of the Revolution we know very little, but one is led to suppose that Reverend Daniel Earle continued his services until debarred by the British. Further it is known that Reverend Charles Pettigrew was rector of this Parish in 1775, and served the Parish several years in this capacity though how long is not known.

The period immediately after the Revolution was disastrous for the Church of England in North Carolina and throughout the United States.

In North Carolina efforts were made to organize the church as early as 1790, but no Convention was held in the State until late as 1793, when three clergymen and three laymen met at Tarboro. The state of the church was represented by them as "truly deplorable from the paucity of the clergy and multiplicity of opposing sectarians." The next year a constitution was prepared and a Bishop elected, namely the Reverend Charles Pettigrew, who because of untoward circumstances was never consecrated. The foundations for its revival were

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not laid until 1817.

The reorganization of St. Paul's Parish began on October 2, 1811, when the Reverend Frederick W. Hatch, a regularly ordained minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, came to the Parish to begin his ministerial duties and on February 21, 1812, at a congregational meeting an organization of the Parish was accomplished, and a Vestry was elected.

The Vestry elected in 1812 inaugurated the policy of renting the pews in the church in order to pay the minister's salary and other expenses.

Something of the state of the church in North Carolina and in Edenton, after the reorganization may be seen from remarks of Bishop Moore of Virginia delivered at the Virginia Convention of 1821, in regard to the Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina which met in Edenton in 1820: "As your regard for the interest of the church must render you alive to her prosperity in every section of the country, I consider it not irrelevant to state to you that I have attended the Convention in North Carolina and that the church of that Diocese holds up to your view the most encouraging prospects. In Edenton, at which place the Convention was convened, our sittings were attended by great numbers of people, some of whom had come from a distance of near fifty miles to witness our proceeding and attend upon our ministry. In that place I ordained two deacons, and admitted one gentleman to the priesthood. In the Diocese so late as the year 1817 there was not a single clergyman: they are now blessed with the labors of seven faithful men; and in the course of another year, several candidates, who are now preparing for Holy Orders, will be admitted to the Ministry of the Word."

Beginning in 1828, with the acceptance by the Reverend John Avery of the rectorship, St. Paul's Parish entered upon a period of growth and prosperous condition.

It may be well to note some of the actions undertaken by the Vestry during the rectorship of Mr. Avery, which continued until October 5, 1835.

The policy of renting pews in the church for de-

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fraying the expenses of the Parish became fully established and the Vestry on several occasions adopted resolutions in furtherance of this policy. It was usual for the pews to be assessed in an amount equal to the prospective expenses of the Parish. This policy continued until after the War Between the States.

On May 15, 1828, it was ordered by the Vestry that the chancel of the church be so enlarged and the pulpit reading desk be so moved back that the railing of the chancel may be in front of the reading desk.

May 9, 1832, the Vestry passed a resolution of thanks to Miss Penelope J. D. Skinner for the gift of an elegant chandelier and a lamp for the pulpit reading desk which were given in memory of her Mother.

April 27, 1833, it was resolved that the spare sconces belonging to the church, which is supposed to be seven pairs of single ones and two pairs of double ones, be presented to Christ Church, Elizabeth City. On October 18, 1835, the Vestry considered a petition from a number of ladies forming the "Mite Society" relating to the alteration of pews, and offering a considerable sum of money in doing the same. It was at first thought impractical to undertake this work although it is not definitely known just what was done.

In 1835, the Reverend John Avery resigned the rectorship, and the Reverend William Cairns was called, and he served for a period of one year. Upon the resignation of the Reverend Mr. Cairns, the Reverend Samuel Iredell Johnston was called to the rectorship of the Parish.

The ministry of the Reverend Samuel I. Johnston was indeed remarkable, and the Parish so flourished under his leadership, that in 1860 the Vestry considered a proposal to enlarge the church by adding transeps in each side of it and making it cruciform in shape. During Mr. Johnston's ministry he did much work among the Negro population and many colored persons attended the services at St. Paul's. As evidence of this we find that on March 27, 1837, the north side of the gallery was reserved for the use of the colored people. Furth-

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er on May 22, 1840, the Vestry considered a proposal to erect a flight of stairs in the southwest end of the church leading to the south gallery which is to be allotted to the use of the colored people, and on June 22, 1841, the Vestry adopted resolutions in regard to use by colored people of certain pews in the main body of the church and also considered the matter of a subscription to raise funds for the purpose of erecting a building for the colored population to worship in.

As further evidence of unusual growth of the Parish under the Reverend Samuel I. Johnston we find that on March 15, 1838, there was a proposal considered by the Vestry to erect a building for the Sunday School and other purposes in connection with the church and although this proposal was not carried out, extensive repairs were made in the church during 1838, and at that time some alteration of the pews was made.

Having received a communication from a committee appointed by the Diocesan Convention, the Vestry on November 21, 1850, instituted an investigation among the members of the congregation to learn, if possible, whether or not any one knew of an instance in which Bishop Ives had by conduct or teaching encouraged doctrines in opposition to the teachings of the church. The records do not show that any such instance was found by the Committee of Investigation although Bishop Ives had been charged with such conduct by the Convention of the Diocese.

The Reverend Samuel I. Johnston continued his rectorship in this Parish until the time of his death in 1865, and was aided by the Reverend C. M. Parkman, who served during the year 1852, and the Reverend Francis W. Hilliard, who began his services in 1857 and continued for more than two years. During the last years of his ministry Reverend Mr. Johnston had no assistant and on March 16, 1861, he offered to resign the rectorship because of infirmities of age, but his resignation was not accepted by the Vestry and he was begged to continue.

Many glowing tributes to Reverend Samuel I. Johnston have been paid by his contemporaries and



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it seems appropriate to quote the words of Doctor Edward Warren, who was a member of his congregation: "That gentleman was the son of John Johnstone, the Surveyor-General of North Carolina in Colonial days, and a member of the State Senate afterward. He graduated at Chapel Hill in the class of 1826, studied law, and subsequently abandoned that profession to enter the ministry of the Episcopal Church. In the pulpit he was noted for the force of his logic and the fervor of his eloquence, while out of it he was distinguished for his zeal, and consistency, as a Christian, and for his loyalty, honesty and guileness as a man.

"He was in all respects a model pastor, illustrating alike by precept and example the truth, beauty and excellence of the faith which he professed, devoting himself with unfaltering fidelity to the welfare of his flock, and leading a life of perfect holiness and sanctity.

"He was emphatically the friend of the poor and the suffering, visiting them, ministering to them, and lavishing his sympathy, and means upon them as if they were allied to him by ties of blood. He was, in truth, the very impersonation of every virtue that gives beauty and dignity to the human character, and he was worshipped as a saint—as something above and beyond common humanity—by all who knew him, and especially by the church which he so honored by the purity of his life and the brilliancy of his ministry."

There are no Parish records for the years 1861 to 1865, and undoubtedly this is due to the turbulent times of the War Between the States. The people of Edenton and Chowan County took an active part in the War and it seems appropriate that some mention of the activities be made.

In November 1861 the entire militia of four companies was ordered to Roanoke Island for its defense. After this a draft of militia was again made and another company formed.

The Edenton Bell Battery was recruited in the winter of '61-'62, and left Edenton soon after the fall of Roanoke Island, going first to Weldon, then Raleigh, next to Richmond and finally to North Carolina again. The Bell Battery was organized in

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response to General Beauregard's famous call to melt the bells. The bells furnished four cannon for the Battery and were, namely, the "St. Paul," from the bell of St. Paul's Church; the "Fannie Roulhac," from the Methodist Church; the "Columbia," from the bells of two shipyards; and the "Edenton," from the Academy, Court House, Hotel, and other bells presented by private individuals. The ultimate end of the cannon made from the bells is not known, but it is believed the "St. Paul" was captured by the Union forces when the gun crew under Sergeant B. F. Hunter was captured near Town Creek, North Carolina, and recent investigation leads to the belief that the other cannon were dumped into the Eno River at Hillsboro, North Carolina, to prevent their capture by the Federal forces and that they have unfortunately been destroyed.

Edenton and Chowan County were occupied by the Union forces in February 1862 and most of the inhabitants of Edenton fled to Virginia and the central section of North Carolina. From the time of this occupation Edenton was under the dominance of Federal Troops.

The first meeting of the Vestry after the War Between the States was held April 18, 1866, and at that time they called Reverend Francis W. Hilliard to the rectorship of the Parish and Mr. Hilliard accepted the call.

Something of the desperate time which followed the War may be seen from the entry in the Parish records of December 9, 1867, in which the committee on the rector's salary reported that they had collected \$250 in money and provisions and it was voted that it all be given the rector, but Mr. Hilliard would accept only \$200, and on this same day it was found necessary to appoint a committee to raise a subscription for heating and lighting the church.

On July 18, 1868, the Vestry granted the request of Judge T. C. Manning to erect, at his own expense, a memorial tablet to the memory of the late rector, Samuel I. Johnston.

Although the matter of changing the lighting of the church with oil lamps to replace candles was



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considered as early as April 23, 1867, the recommendations were not carried out until March 29, 1869, when the Vestry voted to execute the recommendations of the committee on the subject and to install fourteen kerosene oil lamps with globes, six to be placed in the center chandelier, four above the chancel, two on each side beneath the galleries with reflectors, and the branches of the chandelier to be removed: the lamps to be placed to fit in the same place.

Under the leadership of Reverend Francis Hilliard the policy of renting pews was abandoned and on April 29, 1868, the Vestry voted for the pews to be free for one year, and since that time the pews have been free although on one occasion, in 1876, the plan of renting was again proposed and passed by the Vestry, but was never put into effect.

Reverend Francis W. Hilliard resigned in 1869, and was succeeded by Reverend Angelo Benton, who seemed to have an unhappy ministry in this Parish and resigned after four years services.

During Reverend Mr. Benton's rectorship the right to vote in church elections was granted for the first time to the women of the Parish on April 8, 1871.

Another change in the policy of the Parish occurred in 1875, when the Vestry first adopted the envelope and pledge system as the means of raising funds to defray the Parish expenses.

The Reverend W. W. Lord served as rector of the Parish in the year of 1876, from April through June.

At a Vestry meeting held June 29, 1876, the call to the Reverend Robert B. Drane, of Wilmington, was issued, and he accepted with the proviso that he should not undertake his duties until November 1, of that year, and the records show that on November 14, 1876, he presided over his first Vestry meeting in this Parish.

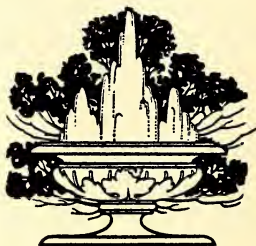
I shall not touch further upon the ministry of Rev. R. B. Drane, D. D., for another member of the Parish is to give you an account of his long and loyal ministry in this Parish.

In presenting this history of St. Paul's Parish I

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hope that I have made it possible for you to realize the many acts of faithfulness, loyalty, sacrifice and enduring devotion to the cause of the church which have made it possible for this Parish to exist for more than two hundred years, and for this church to be in continuous use as a House of God for a period almost equally as long.



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# THE MINISTRY OF

## THE REV. R. B. DRANE, D. D.

— BY —

MRS. CHARLES P. WALES



God no longer speaks to man face to face nor in omens, prophecies and dreams, but sends His messages and His lessons by the lives of His best-loved children. Thus the history of this Parish would be incomplete without special mention of one who lived and labored here for more than half a century, serving faithfully both God and man as Rector of St. Paul's Church. Such is the record of Rev. Robert Brent Drane, D. D., whose long years of service have enriched for posterity St. Paul's priceless heritage from the past.

He was born at Wilmington, N. C., December 5, 1851, the son of Rev. Robert Drane and his wife, Catherine Parker, both descendants of colonial ancestors who had left their mark on their day and generation. He was educated at St. Stephen's College, Annandale, N. Y., and the General Theological Seminary, New York City. After finishing at the latter place he was ordained a deacon and served one year at St. James' Church, Wilmington, as assistant. On November 1, 1876, (All Saints Day) he came to Edenton and became Priest in charge (having received the order of Priesthood) of old St. Paul's and served continuously until his resignation because of illness in 1932. In 1878 he married a native of Edenton, Maria Louisa Skinner, daughter of Major Tristram L. Skinner and wife, Eliza Harwood, who was a fitting helpmeet throughout the years until her death in 1921, and whose life and character truly exemplified the "beauty of holiness." A family of seven children grew to manhood and womanhood, six of whom are now living. In this long period of time the golden thread of his life and service has been so woven into the fabric of this commonwealth that he has endeared himself

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not only to his own congregation, but to the entire community, both in civic and religious life. He has always taken a great interest in all things that would be of benefit to the people and the town. Edenton has never had a more public-spirited citizen, being always keenly alive to any enterprise and effort to improve the industrial, economic and social life of the community. For a number of years he has been a trustee of St. Mary's School, of the University of the South, and of St. Augustine's School, and during his service as Rector of St. Paul's he was a delegate to the General Convention from the Diocese of East Carolina continuously over a period of 40 years and was chosen president of the Diocesan Convention many times. About 1895 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of the South at Sewanee as testimony to his scholarly attainments.

In 1883 Dr. Drane, then a young clergyman in the Diocese, served as temporary secretary of the Convention in New Bern, when the Diocese of East Carolina was formed, the separation from the Diocese of North Carolina having been previously authorized by the General Convention, and at this time the Rev. A. A. Watson was chosen the first Bishop of the new Diocese. The names of "Wilmington," "Roanoke" and "Albemarle" were considered for the new Diocese, but East Carolina was finally selected as being more comprehensive in its geographical significance.

During his ministry of 56 years the records disclose the following number of ceremonies performed by him:

Number of baptisms: White, 441; colored, 16.

Presented for confirmation: White, 303; colored, 12.

Number of marriages: White, 123; colored, 2.

Number of burials: White, 298; colored, 9.

In St. Paul's Church there is a tablet to the memory of the Rev. Daniel Earl, once Rector of the church. It was he who first established fishing as an industry here and carried it on during the time of his ministry. On one Sunday morning before service, the following verse was found fastened to the church door, the authorship of which has never

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been discovered:

“A tumble-down church  
And a broken-down steeple,  
A herring-catching parson  
And a D—— set of people.”

Sitting one day in his study discussing this incident with friends, Colonel R. B. Creecy, of Elizabeth City, a native of Edenton, who in his early manhood was a member of St. Paul's Church, turned to his desk and penned the following lines as an answer to the above couplet:

Then 1766—now 1899

A Godly parson, steady to his trust,  
Sturdy in faith, benevolent and just;  
A grand Cathedral, venerable pile,  
That bids us pause, and muse awhile,  
Where Saints on earth their earnest voices raise  
And pealing anthems swell the notes of praise.  
A stately steeple pointing to the sky,  
That lifts us Heavenward as we pass it by.  
Such is the story of thy sacred halls,  
Dearest of memories, hallowed old St. Paul's.

Rev. Frederick B. Drane, formerly Arch Deacon of the Yukon in Alaska, and now Rector of St. Paul's Church in Monroe, North Carolina, is the third generation to serve in the ministry of the church, Dr. Drane's father having been Rector of St. James' Church, Wilmington, and giving his life when his son was a small boy in caring for the sick during a scourge of yellow fever in the community, where he fell a victim to the disease.

Dr. Drane has always been deeply interested in all matters of history and was for a number of years president of the Roanoke Colony Memorial Association, of which he was a charter member, a contributor to the North Carolina Historical Booklet and other magazines, and a member of the North Carolina Historical Commission, his work and interest being characterized at all times by a careful and meticulous attention and devotion to accuracy. The preservation of much valuable historical material in St. Paul's has been due to his untiring research and effort.

He was largely instrumental in the building of

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the Chapel, St.-Andrews-by-the-Sea, at Nags Head, and is still in charge of that sea-side mission and of the Roanoke Memorial Chapel. He has also been active in the restoration of St. Thomas' Church, at Bath.

In 1926 a celebration was held in the Parish of the 50th anniversary of his Rectorship of St. Paul's and the splendid cooperation of the community and surrounding county bore tribute to the love and esteem in which he was held. This occasion was also the 225th anniversary of the organization of the Parish in 1701. A pageant "The Bells of Old St. Paul's," written by Theodosia Wales Glenn, presented in an impressive and artistic manner the history of the church, closing with a portrayal of the events and achievements of Dr. Drane's ministry and the presentation of a gold loving cup as a token of affection and honor.

On the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of his rectorship a portrait of him given by his parishioners was unveiled and now hangs in the Parish House.

His love of flowers has always been a happy resource to him and the beautiful magnolias which border the walk to the church were brought by him as small seedlings from Calvary Church, Tarboro, where his uncle, Bishop Cheshire, was Rector, and planted here soon after he came to Edenton. So diversified have been his interests that sportsmen have found a bond of union with him in his keen pleasure in fishing and boating and in past years his sailing craft was a familiar sight on the waters of Edenton Bay.

It is difficult indeed, well nigh impossible, to pay fitting tribute to one so near and dear, whose life has been so bound up with the lives of those who have known the benediction of his all-embracing sympathy and love; such tribute must be written with pen dipped in my heart.

As a theologian and scholar he ranks high, as churchman he is unswerving in his loyalty to the doctrine and articles of the faith; no base alloy enters into the composition of his character. Combined with these enduring qualities he possesses a rare charm which has made itself felt in all of his



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social contacts and which illumines with grace and beauty the common walks of life.

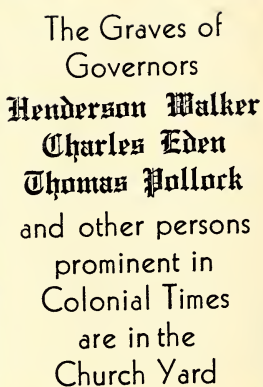
During his ministry and his life in the community Dr. Drane has seen children in his parish grow from infancy, marry, rear families of their own, and pass away. A record of his daily life throughout the years would portray the history of this community. The predominating traits of his character are fidelity to duty, and a consecrated and consistent living up to his Christian principles. His is the simple, unaffected, genuine life of one who walks with God. In these days when the aim of so many seems but a mere epicurean existence, it is refreshing to think of one who stands for the best. There seems such a poverty of ideals; we are so dependent upon externals and at times so lacking in that something within which enables us to resist the trials of life when supreme moments come. With the seeming lowering of standards, the threatened disintegration of family life, and the possible drifting away from the old safe, sweet moorings, what an inspiration to contemplate the figure and the life of this earnest, humble minister of Christ!

"As the shadows lengthen and evening comes, and the fever of life is over and his work is done, then may God in His infinite mercy grant him a holy rest and peace at the last."





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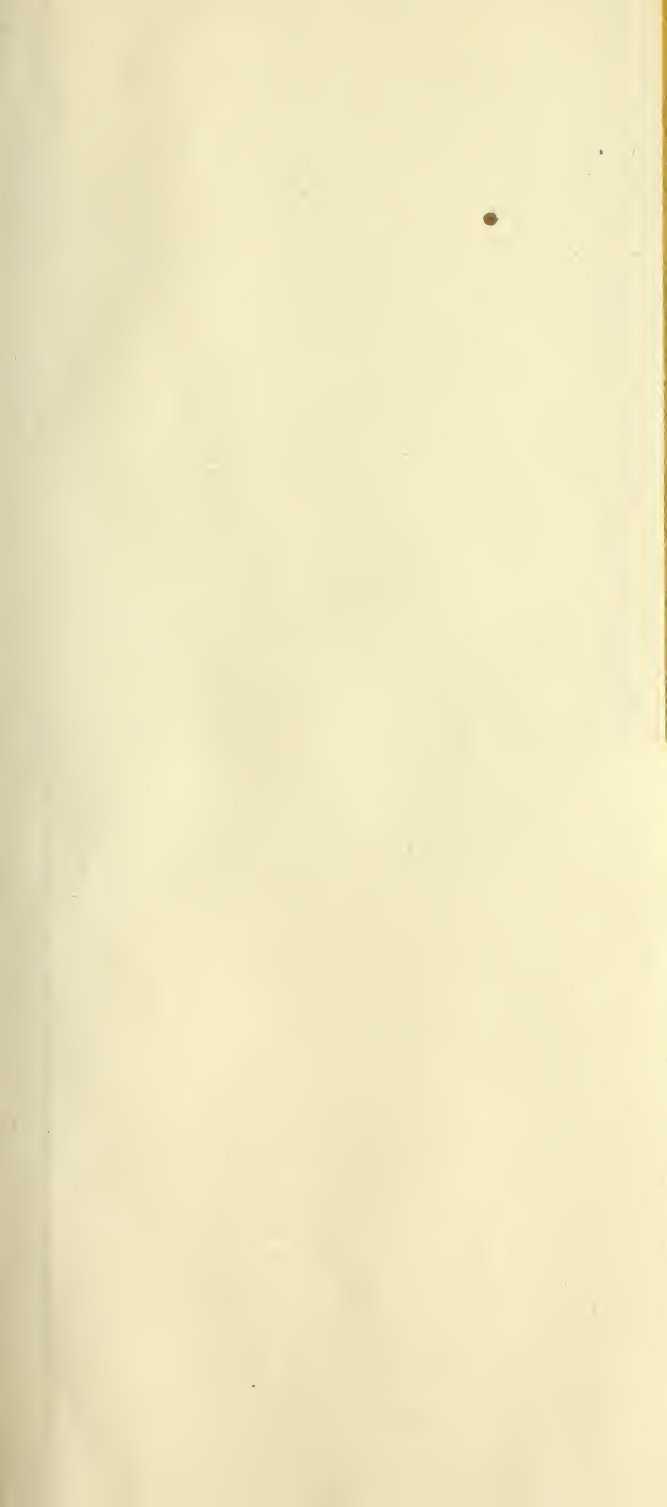


The Graves of  
Governors  
**Henderson Walker**  
**Charles Eden**  
**Thomas Pollock**  
and other persons  
prominent in  
Colonial Times  
are in the  
Church Yard





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